

Mr. LEVIN. This letter states that "there should be no doubt that the Jewish community believes the Jackson-Vanik requirements have been met in terms of immigration and freedom of movement in today's Russia."

This bill, which Senator BAUCUS is introducing and which I am pleased to co-sponsor, would enhance relations between the United States and Russia. While recognizing the advances made by Russia, the legislation also ensures that Congress can continue to play a meaningful role in addressing trade disputes with Russia and in setting the terms of World Trade Organization, WTO, accession for Russia.

While this legislation grants Permanent Normal Trade Relations, PNTR, to the Russian Federation, it does not abrogate the rights of Congress to comment on Russia's accession to the WTO nor does it remain silent about the need for continued progress by the Russian Federation with regard to human rights matters.

The Jackson-Vanik amendment was but one part of the Trade Act of 1974 that addressed trade with nonmarket economies. Recognizing the trade policy aspects of "graduating" a country from Jackson-Vanik, Congress has traditionally granted PNTR to a country subject to Jackson-Vanik only at the time of its accession to the WTO. This practice has given Congress the ability to voice its approval for the terms by which a nation accedes to the WTO. The terms for Russia's WTO accession are still being discussed, and even though this legislation would provide PNTR for Russia before those terms are final it also provides Congress with the means to comment on those terms and voice its approval or disapproval for them.

This legislation addresses the concerns of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment while preserving Congress' ability to play a key role in discussions about Russia's accession to the WTO. In a piece encouraging the ending of Jackson-Vanik's applicability for Russia, the Israel Policy Forum stated that: "things change. Old empires disappear. Old enemies become new friends. History's challenge is to anticipate its direction and move along with it."

This legislation recognizes the profound changes wrought by the Jackson-Vanik Amendment while acknowledging our need to move forward as we continue to engage with Russia on matters of human rights and trade.

EXHIBIT 1

JUNE 27, 2002.

Hon. CARL LEVIN,  
United States Senate,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR LEVIN: I am pleased we had an opportunity to meet when I was in Washington, DC last week. Your long-standing interest in promoting closer working relationships between the U.S. Senate and the Russian parliament is much appreciated.

As promised, I am sending a copy of my letter, as president of the Russian Jewish Congress, to Presidents Bush and Putin ex-

pressing support for repeal of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment. I prepared the letter some time ago and it is surprising that more people in the U.S. Senate were unaware that it had been sent. There should be no doubt that the Jewish community believes the Jackson-Vanik requirements have been met in terms of immigration and freedom of movement in today's Russia.

I have also taken note of your concerns about the sale of dual use technology to Iran and Iraq. In this regard, as you recall I proposed in our meeting that our two chambers establish a framework to assess how we can both develop greater cooperation on matters of mutual concern. I am very pleased that both you and Chairman Biden encouraged me to develop such a framework and look forward to working with both of you to see that this is accomplished.

On another matter, I know of your interest in reducing America's dependence on oil shipments from Middle East countries and though you would like to know that Russian oil company YUKOS, will be delivering the first load of Russian oil to Houston, Texas soon. I am confident that Russia could be a reliable supplier and would welcome the opportunity to work with you and others in Congress on initiatives that would encourage this development.

It is my hope to build a closer working relationship with select members of the U.S. Senate in order to take a fresh approach to a new set of challenges that beset both our countries.

In recognition of the upcoming celebration of America's Independence Day on July 4, I extend my best wishes to you, as representative of the people, for your country's remarkable achievement.

Sincerely,

LEONID NEVZLIN,  
Senator, Deputy Chairman of the Committee  
for Foreign Affairs, Council of Federation of  
Russian Parliament.

#### COVER THE UNINSURED WEEK

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, as most of my colleagues know, this week is Cover the Uninsured Week in America. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and a host of other organizations, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the AFL-CIO, and AARP, have come together, recognizing that we can delay no longer in addressing this critical issue. Like them, I believe that Congress should seize this opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to bringing high quality, affordable, and stable health coverage within reach of the 41 million Americans who now go without.

Health insurance coverage is the best predictor of access to health care in America today; yet, despite its importance, more than 41 million Americans remain uninsured, and 75 million Americans under 65 years of age—three out of every 10—were uninsured at some point during the past two years. Experts estimate that this number will increase by 1 to 3 million people this year as the economic downturn continues. In our state alone, 436,000 people sought Oregon Health Plan coverage last year—a 14 percent increase since 2000.

I know we can reverse this trend because we have done it in the past. During my first year in the U.S. Senate, I

helped create the State Children's Health Insurance Program, SCHIP. That program provides coverage for needy children who do not qualify for the Oregon Health Plan. Today, all 50 States have SCHIP programs providing for 4.6 million children. And in 2001, Oregon's SCHIP program provided health coverage to over 41,000 needy children.

While we in Congress debate the ways in which legislators can help tackle this difficult problem, people all over the country are acting on their own to help bring health services and a better quality of life to countless vulnerable Americans. During Cover the Uninsured Week I would like to tell you about one person from my own state of Oregon whom I consider to be a true "Health Care Hero." Mr. Ian Timm is a man who has truly made a difference to the lives and health of many Oregonians.

Mr. Timm is well known as an effective advocate bringing health services to Oregon's needy. Whether serving on the Oregon Rural Health Association board, chairing the Oregon Statewide Health Coordinating Council, or providing leadership as a Linn County Commissioner, Mr. Timm has dedicated his professional life to making a difference in the lives of others. He is well known for providing both vision and structure to Oregon's efforts to provide quality health services for children and families. Because of his work, young children receive immunizations, mothers have quality pre-natal care, and seniors have the attention of physicians, all regardless of their financial status.

In Oregon, we have a tradition of taking care of those who cannot take care of themselves—Mr. Timm has been a leader in making this value a reality. For instance, Mr. Timm's vision led to the development of Care Oregon, which provides health coverage for thousands of Oregonians as the largest insurer of clients within the Oregon Health Plan. He serves on the Oregon Partnership to Immunize Children, ensuring that Oregon kids receive the preventive care they need. Through his work at the Oregon Primary Care Association, Mr. Timm has increased access to health care by bringing resources to community based health centers. These centers are one of the most effective ways to provide health care to those who often drop through the cracks, preventing disease and saving lives.

But Mr. Timm's service is not limited to our borders. Driven by his faith and concern for others, he has shared his time and talents overseas in the Sudan and in Thailand. During the Ethiopian refugee crisis, he supervised the construction of camps and provided medical and sanitation services for 105,000 refugees. In Thailand, he created sanitation programs for 14 refugee camps, and supervised two outpatient clinics, public and school health programs, and the Khmer Health Training Center. Few of us are willing to forsake the comforts of home, yet Mr. Timm

volunteered to bring hope and life to those in the most desperate corners of the globe.

Mr. Timm has built both a local and national reputation as an effective advocate and distinguished public servant who is a true friend to the poor and vulnerable. This year, Mr. Timm will retire from professional service, ending his distinguished career as the Executive Director of the Oregon Primary Care Association. He will be sorely missed. But given his record of valuable service, I'm confident he will continue to make a difference for Oregonians.

I salute Ian Timm for his record of accomplishment and tremendous legacy of healthy Oregon children and families. He is the definition of a Health Care Hero and an example of compassionate service for all of us here in Congress and across America.

We in the U.S. Senate have a moral obligation to follow Ian Timm's example. In so doing, the 108th Congress can leave its own legacy of healthy children and families. Cover the Uninsured week lasts only 7 days, but I urge my colleagues to continue their personal commitment to this issue throughout their time in public office and beyond. Only with this type of dedication can we truly keep America healthy.

#### UH-60 BLACKHAWK CRASH AT FORT DRUM, NEW YORK

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I rise today to mourn the loss of 11 brave soldiers killed in a UH-60 Blackhawk crash on the afternoon of Tuesday, March 11, at Fort Drum, New York. This tragic accident occurred as the unit was conducting a routine training exercise. One of the young men on board, Pfc. Stryder O. Stoutenburg, was from Missoula, MT. He was only 18 and was assigned to Charlie Company, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment.

The other 10 young men killed are: Cpt. Christopher E. Britton, 27, from Ohio, assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 10th Aviation Regiment.

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Kenneth L. Miller, 35, from California, assigned to Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 10th Aviation Regiment.

Staff Sgt. Brian Pavlich, 25, from Port Jervis, NY, assigned to Charlie Company, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment.

Sgt. John L. Eichenlaub, Jr., 24, from South Williamsport, PA, assigned to Charlie Company, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment.

Sgt. Joshua M. Harapko, 23, from Peoria, AZ, assigned to Charlie Company, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment.

Spc. Lucas V. Tripp, 23, from Aurora, CO, assigned to Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 10th Aviation Regiment.

Spc. Barry M. Stephens, 20, from Pinson, AL, assigned to Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 10th Aviation Regiment.

Pfc. Shawn A. Mayerscik, 22, from Oil City, PA, assigned to Charlie Com-

pany, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment.

Pfc. Tommy C. Young, 20, from Knoxville, TN, assigned to Charlie Company, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment.

Pfc. Andrew D. Stevens, 20, from Rockingham, NH, assigned to Charlie Company, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment.

In addition, two young men were seriously injured—Spc. Dmitri Petrov and Spc. Edwin A. Mejia, both from Charlie Company, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment.

Each and every one of these young men was a patriot and served their country bravely. My thoughts and prayers go out to the families of these boys. While the cause of the accident remains under investigation, I have asked to be kept informed of any and all developments and am confident that a thorough examination will be conducted.

Our brave military men and women fully know the risk they take in doing their duty and they meet this risk head on, to ensure that the rest of us continue to live with freedom. Tragic accidents such as this one truly remind us all of the high price of freedom.

I will continue working with my colleagues to make sure our troops have the best equipment, instruction, and supplies to ensure their safety not only on the battlefield, but in training exercises as well. May God bless the young soldiers who died training to defend the values of this great Nation.

#### MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE PAN- THERS' WELL-PRACTICED TRADI- TION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today I want to bring to the Senate's attention a group of student athletes in Vermont who have an unusual and admirable tradition. For the past 42 years, Middlebury College freshman have helped a Middlebury man with a disability make it to football and basketball games like clockwork. It is another example where students' education extends far beyond the walls of a college classroom.

In the March 10, 2003, issue of Sports Illustrated, well-known sports columnist Rick Reilly took a moment to explain the tradition to his readers. Middlebury College has long been recognized as one of the Nation's finest institutions of higher education. The quality of its faculty, the rigors of coursework, stunning facilities, and the success of its athletic programs are the foundation for Middlebury's storied history and academic reputation. Yet it also is what goes unnoticed that makes this truly a special place—like a tradition that takes place right before the start of every football and basketball game. It is a tradition that has come to exemplify what it means to be a Middlebury College Panther, a Vermonter, and a person in full.

For the past 42 years, the freshman members of the Middlebury College

football and basketball teams have been going to Butch Varno's house before the start of the game and literally giving him a lift. Mr. Varno, who from infancy has contended with cerebral palsy, is confined to a wheelchair and does not drive. On game day, he anticipates the arrival of a small band of Panthers for a ride to the game, which includes lifting Mr. Varno out of bed and getting him to the bleachers.

We in Vermont are proud of the student athletes who make this happen before each game. Whether they know it or not, they represent the very best of our Nation's college students. They are learning, playing hard and, most importantly, caring for others in their community.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of Rick Reilly's column be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From Sports Illustrated, Mar. 10, 2003]

EXTRA CREDIT

(By Rick Reilly)

The best college tradition is not dotting the i at Ohio State. It's not stealing the goat from Navy. Or waving the wheat at Kansas.

It's Picking Up Butch at Middlebury (Vt.) College.

For 42 years Middlebury freshman athletes have been Picking Up Butch for football and basketball games. It's a sign-up sheet thing. Carry the ball bags. Gather all the towels. Pick Up Butch.

Basketball players, men and women, do it during football season. Football players do it during basketball season. Two hours before each home game, two freshmen grab whatever car they can get and drive a mile off campus to the tiny house where 54-year-old Butch Varno lives with his 73-year-old mother, Helen, who never got her driver's license. And they literally Pick Up Butch, 5'3" and 170 pounds, right off his bed.

They put him in his wheelchair and push him out of the house, or one guy hauls him in a fireman's carry. They pile him into the car, cram the wheelchair into the trunk, take him to the game and roll him to his spot in the mezzanine for football games or at the end of the bench for basketball.

Butch always smiles and says the same thing from the bottom of his heart: "CP just sucks." Cerebral palsy. While his fondest dream has always been to play basketball, it'll never happen. There is little that he can physically do for himself.

"At first, you're a little nervous; you're like, I don't know," says freshman wide receiver Ryan Armstrong. "But the older guys say, 'We did it when we were freshmen. Now you go get him. It's tradition.' So me and my buddy got him the first week. He's pretty heavy. We bumped his head a couple of times getting him into the car. He's like, 'Hey! Be careful!' But he loves getting out so much that afterward you feel good. It's fun to put a smile like that on somebody's face."

And the kids don't just Pick Up Butch. They also Keep Butch Company. Take Butch to the Bathroom. Feed Butch. "He always likes a hot dog and a Coke," says 6'8" Clark Read, 19, a power forward. "It's kind of weird at first, sticking a hot dog in his mouth. The trick is to throw out the last bite so he doesn't get your fingers."

Thanks to 42 years of freshmen, Butch hardly ever misses a Middlebury game. Not that he hasn't been late.

"One day this year, the two guys were calling me on their cell," says Armstrong, "and